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U.S. to relist Yemen's Houthis as specially designated global terrorists, AP sources say

By MATTHEW LEE, AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is expected to soon announce plans to redesignate Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen as specially designated global terrorists, according to two people familiar with the White House decision and a U.S. official. The move comes as the Houthis have launched dozens of attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea. The group says it has attacked the ships in response to Israel's military operations in Gaza in the aftermath of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel. The three people familiar with the decision were not authorized to comment and requested anonymity to discuss the matter ahead of the expected formal announcement.



Jake Sullivan, U.S. National Security Advisor, leaves after meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024.

Associated Press
Page 2

Continued on Page 2

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U.S. to relist Yemen's Houthis as specially designated global terrorists, AP sources say

Continued from Front

The administration is expected to make the announcement on Wednesday, the U.S. official said.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken delisted the Houthis as both foreign terrorist organizations and as specially designated global terrorists in February 2021 as the administration sought to make it easier to get humanitarian aid into Yemen.

In its waning days, the Trump administration designated the Houthis a Foreign Terrorist Organization over the strong objections of human rights and humanitarian aid groups. The foreign terrorist designation barred Americans and people and organizations subject to U.S. jurisdiction from providing "material support" to the Houthis, which the groups said would result in an even greater humanitarian catastrophe than what

was already happening in Yemen.

Shortly after the Biden administration took office, Blinken removed the designations in a step that was roundly criticized by conservative lawmakers and others but was intended to keep much-needed food, medicine and other aid flowing to Yemen. The specially designated global terrorists label to be reimposed on the Houthis does not include sanctions



Jake Sullivan, U.S. National Security Advisor speaks during the Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024.

Associated Press

for providing "material support" and it does not come with travel bans that are also imposed with the FTO label. Thus, it may not pose a substantial impediment to providing aid to Yemeni civilians. Meanwhile, a senior White House official said Tuesday that addressing the ongoing threat by Yemen's Houthi rebels on commercial vessels in the Red Sea is an "all hands on deck" problem that the U.S. and allies must address together to minimize impact on the global economy. "How long this goes on and how bad it gets comes down not just to the decisions of the countries in the coalition that took strikes last week," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said during an appearance at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The Iran-backed Houthi group has launched dozens of attacks since November on vessels in the Red Sea, a vital corridor for the world's shipping traffic, in what they say is an effort to support Palestinians in the war with Israel. U.S. and British forces have responded by carrying out dozens of air and sea strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen since Friday. The attacks by the Houthis have continued. Linda Thomas Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the United

Nations, said last week that 2,000 ships since November have been forced to divert thousands of miles to avoid the Red Sea. Houthi militants have threatened or taken hostage mariners from more than 20 countries.

Aid organizations worry that sweeping economic penalties could have relatively little impact on the Houthi organization, a defiant and isolated group that has little to no assets to be affected by U.S. sanctions. Stronger measures could threaten devastating consequences for ordinary Yemenis, who already are among the poorest and hungriest people in the world, aid officials say.

War and chronic misgovernment have left 24 million Yemenis at risk of hunger and disease as of 2023, and roughly 14 million in acute need of assistance, the United Nations says. About two-thirds of Yemenis live in territory controlled by the Houthis.

Yemen imports 90% of its food. While supporters of broad sanctions argue it's possible to shape any enforcement mechanisms to exempt food and humanitarian aid, aid organizations worry that fears of running afoul of U.S. regulation could scare away shippers, banks and other players vital to Yemen's commercial food supply. □

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Lawmakers announce bipartisan effort to enhance child tax credit, revive tax breaks for businesses

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairmen of the top tax policy committees in Congress announced a bipartisan agreement Tuesday to enhance the child tax credit and revive a variety of tax breaks for businesses, a combination designed to attract support from lawmakers of both political parties. The roughly \$78 billion in tax cuts would be paid for by more quickly ending a tax break Congress approved during the COVID-19 pandemic that encouraged businesses to keep employees on their payroll.

The agreement was announced by Sen. Ron Wyden, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Jason Smith, the Republican chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. The lawmakers have been negotiating for months on a tax package that would address an array of priorities before lawmakers turn their focus to election season.

Wyden said his goal is to gain approval of the measure in time for businesses and families to benefit during the upcoming filing season. The Internal Revenue Service will begin accepting and processing tax returns on Jan. 29, so lawmakers are looking to move the bill as quickly as possible.

Meeting that goal may prove difficult as lawmakers are already racing to finish their spending bills and are considering a bill focused on both aiding Israel, and Ukraine and stemming the flow of migrants entering the country at the U.S.-Mexico border. One option would be for leaders in the House and Senate to attach the measure to one of those top-priority bills.

In forging the agreement, Democratic negotiators were focused on boosting the child tax credit. The tax credit is \$2,000 per child, but only \$1,600 is refundable, which makes it avail-

able to parents who owe little to nothing in federal income taxes. The bill would incrementally increase the maximum refundable child tax credit to \$1,800 for 2023 tax returns, \$1,900 for the following year and \$2,000 for 2025 tax returns.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank and advocacy group, projected that about 16 million children in low-income families would benefit from the child tax credit expansion. "Given today's miserable political climate, it's a big deal to have this opportunity to pass pro-family policy that helps so many kids get ahead," Wyden said in a statement announcing the deal. Republicans were focused on tax breaks for businesses that they said would help grow the economy. The tax breaks in the bill would generally align their expiration date — the end of 2025 — with many of the other tax cuts that were approved in 2017.

Most notably, the bill would give companies of all sizes the ability to deduct research and development costs immediately rather than over the course of five years. It would also allow businesses to fully deduct the purchase of equipment, machinery and technology. And, the bill also provides more flexibility in determining how much borrowing can be deducted.

Smith said the agreement "strengthens Main Street businesses, boosts our competitiveness with China, and creates jobs."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he supported the tax package and "that there are many things in it both sides can celebrate." He praised the inclusion of an increased tax credit for the construction and rehabilitation of housing for low-income households, and he said he could not have supported the package without it.

"The low-income housing tax credit is one of the

most effective tools in existence to increase the supply of affordable housing," Schumer said. "This package will make this credit far more generous and far more easy to access." Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., was expected to meet with Smith on Tuesday to discuss the tax agreement.

Some lawmakers have insisted that any tax extensions be paid for so as not to add to projected deficits. The authors of the agreement attempt to do that by speeding up the demise of the employee retention tax credit. Under current law, businesses had until April 15 of next year to claim



The U.S. Capitol is seen on Jan. 8, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

the credit. The bill would bar additional claims after Jan. 31 of this year. It also would increase penalties

for tax preparers failing to undertake due diligence in submitting those COVID-19-related claims. □

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Suspect in Long Island's Gilgo Beach serial killings is charged with the death of a fourth woman

By **PHILIP MARCELO** and **DAVID COLLINS**

Associated Press

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (AP) —

A New York architect charged in a string of slayings known as the Gilgo Beach killings was accused Tuesday in the death of a fourth woman, a Connecticut mother of two who vanished in 2007 and whose remains were found more than three years later along a coastal highway on Long Island.

Rex Heuermann was formally charged in the killing of Maureen Brainard-Barnes, months after having been labeled the prime suspect in her death when he was arrested in July in the deaths of three other women. Wearing a dark suit, he remained silent in court as his lawyer entered a not guilty plea on his behalf. He will continue to be held without bail until his next court date on Feb. 6.

Police say the breakthrough came from DNA extracted from hair at the scene. A hair found with Brainard-Barnes' remains is genetically similar to a DNA sample taken from Heuermann's ex-wife. During the period when Brainard-Barnes disappeared in 2007, Heuermann's ex-wife and his daughter were staying out of town at a hotel in Atlantic City, the indictment and her attorney confirmed.

Prosecutors also said in Tuesday's court filing that Heuermann feared getting



Alleged Gilgo serial killer Rex Heuermann appears inside Judge Timothy P. Mazzei's courtroom with his attorney Michael Brown at Suffolk County Court in Riverhead, N.Y. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024.

caught in the months leading up to his arrest.

He obtained data wiping software in an attempt to destroy evidence on his laptops, phones and other electronic devices, they said. Investigators seized hundreds of devices during their lengthy search of Heuermann's home that prosecutors say contained troves of bondage and torture pornography.

Heuermann also scoured the internet for phrases that suggested he was afraid of getting caught, including "How does cell site analysis work," "Gilgo news," "How cell phone tracking is in-

creasingly being used to solve crimes," and phrases with the term "Long Island Serial Killer."

Heuermann's attorney, Michael Brown, said afterward that his client has maintained his innocence from "day one" and looked forward to defending himself in court.

He also called into question some of the evidence touted by prosecutors Tuesday, suggesting new DNA analysis connecting Heuermann to the killing was "problematic" since it was being introduced some 13 years after Brainard-Barnes' body was discovered.

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond Tierney said in response that more sophisticated DNA testing had allowed investigators to more conclusively determine the hairs found with Brainard-Barnes belonged to Heuermann's ex-wife and daughter.

He also said the indictment marks the end of the investigation into the so-called "Gilgo four" victims and provides "some small measure of closure" for their families. Prosecutors now turn their attention to prosecuting those cases and investigating other bodies found nearby, Tierney added.

Brainard-Barnes left her hometown of Norwich, Connecticut, on July 9, 2007, and headed to Manhattan for sex work, with plans to return the following day, according to friends who became concerned when she uncharacteristically stopped using her phone. But the 25-year-old never came back.

Nicolette Brainard-Barnes said she was only 7 years old when her mother, who was once employed as a dealer at the Foxwoods Resort Casino, vanished.

"I remember she read to me every night," the now 24-year-old said, surrounded by other family members following Tuesday's court hearing. "Now I can no longer remember the sound of her voice."

Maureen Brainard-Barnes' sister, Melissa Cann, remembered her as a "loving mother and giving friend" who would "never get the chance to show the world how talented she was."

"Maureen was more than how she has been portrayed," the 39-year-old said through tears.

Heuermann was arrested July 14 and charged with killing Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman and Amber Lynn Costello, three women who authorities say also were sex workers. Heuermann's lawyer said he has denied committing the crimes. He previously pleaded not guilty to killing Barthelemy, Waterman and Costello. □

Associated Press



Professional wrestler Hulk Hogan poses for photographers on March 29, 2018, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Wrestler Hulk Hogan helps rescue teenage girl trapped after Florida car crash

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Retired wrestler Hulk Hogan and a friend rescued a teenage girl who was trapped in an overturned vehicle after a crash in Florida, according to Hogan's social media posts.

Hogan said on the social media platform X that he used a ball point pen to puncture the car's airbag and free the girl after wit-

nessing the accident Sunday night in Tampa.

His new wife, yoga instructor Sky Daily, took to Facebook to praise the quick action taken by her 70-year-old husband and the couple's friend Jake Rask.

"By all appearances, she was unscathed, just really rattled, which is an absolute miracle!" Daily wrote. The Tampa Police De-

partment said in an email Tuesday that there were only minor injuries from the crash.

Hogan, whose real name is Terry Bollea, is a member of the WWE Hall of Fame and lives in the Tampa Bay area.

"Thank you God, all is well even now," he said on X. "Amen HH." □

Iran strikes targets in northern Iraq and Syria as regional tensions escalate

By **QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA**
and **SALAR SALIM**

Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — Iran fired missiles late Monday at what it claimed were Israeli “spy headquarters” near the U.S. Consulate in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, and at targets linked to the extremist group Islamic State in northern Syria.

Four civilians were killed and six injured after missiles hit an upscale area near the consulate in Irbil, the seat of Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdish region, according to the security council of the Kurdish regional government.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said in a statement that it had hit a headquarters of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Another statement said it had fired a number of ballistic missiles at “terrorist operations,” including Islamic State targets, in Syria and destroyed them.

Israel did not immediately acknowledge the attack in Irbil and its embassy in Washington did not return a request for comment on



This image taken from video provided by Rudaw TV shows smoke rising from a building hit by a strike in Irbil, Iraq, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024.

the Iranian allegation regarding the Mossad.

The strikes come at a time of heightened tensions in the region and fears of a wider spillover of the ongoing war in Gaza.

Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq have launched near-daily drone attacks on bases housing U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, which the groups have said was in retaliation for Washington’s support of

Israel, and in an attempt to force U.S. troops to leave the region.

The United States strongly condemns “Iran’s reckless missile strikes” in Irbil, said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller. He said the attacks “undermine Iraq’s stability.”

A U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details that had not been made public said the U.S. tracked the missiles, which hit in

northern Iraq and northern Syria, and no U.S. facilities were struck or damaged in the attacks.

The official said initial indications were that the strikes were “reckless and imprecise.”

However, the full extent of the damage from the strikes could not be independently assessed.

An Iraqi security official said Irbil was targeted with “several” ballistic missiles but did not give further details.

An official with an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia said 10 missiles fell in the area near the U.S. Consulate. He said the missiles were launched by Iran’s Revolutionary Guards. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity. Peshraw Dizayi, a prominent local businessman with a portfolio that included real estate and security services companies, was killed in one of the Irbil strikes along with members of his family, according to a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, by Mashan al-Jabouri, a former Iraqi member of parliament. Al-Jabouri said that one of the missiles had fallen on Dizayi’s “palace, next to my house, which is under construction on the road to the Salah al-Din resort.”

Other regional political figures also confirmed Dizayi’s death.

In 2022, Iran claimed responsibility for a missile barrage that struck in the same area near the sprawling U.S. Consulate complex in Irbil, saying it was retaliation for an Israeli strike in Syria that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard. □

Associated Press

Iceland faces daunting period after lava from volcano destroys homes in fishing town, president says

By **MARCO DI MARCO**

Associated Press

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Iceland’s president said the country is battling “tremendous forces of nature” after molten lava from a volcano in the island’s southwest consumed several houses in the evacuated town of Grindavik.

Scientists said Monday that the eruption appeared to be dying down, but it was too soon to declare the danger over.

Iceland’s Meteorological Office said “it is difficult to estimate how long this eruption will last.”

President Gudni Th. Johannesson said in a televised address late Sunday that

“a daunting period of upheaval has begun on the Reykjanes Peninsula” where a long-dormant volcanic system has awakened.

A volcano on the peninsula erupted for the second time in less than a month on Sunday, with orange lava bursting through two fissures near the fishing town of Grindavik. Authorities had ordered residents to leave hours earlier as a swarm of small earthquakes indicated an imminent eruption.

The nearby Blue Lagoon geothermal spa one of Iceland’s biggest tourist attractions also shut and said that it would remain closed

until at least Tuesday.

Grindavik, a town of 3,800 people about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik, was previously evacuated in November when the Svartsengi volcanic system awakened after almost 800 years with a series of earthquakes that opened large cracks in the earth between the town and Sýlingarfell, a small mountain to the north.

The volcano eventually erupted on Dec. 18, sending lava flowing away from Grindavik. Residents were allowed to return to their homes on Dec. 22.

Since then, emergency workers have been building

defensive walls that have stopped much of the lava

flow from the new eruption short of the town. □



An aerial view of the lava field with the main active vent, the town of Grindavik is in the background, Iceland, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024.

Wave of transgender slayings in Mexico spurs anger and protests by LGBTQ+ community

MEGAN JANETSKY
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Authorities in Mexico said at least three transgender people were killed in the first two weeks of 2024, and rights groups were investigating two additional such cases. The slayings marked a violent start to the year in a country where the LGBTQ+ community is often targeted.

The latest death came on Sunday, when transgender activist and politician Samantha Gómez Fonseca was shot multiple times and slain inside a car in the south of Mexico City, according to local prosecutors. The killings spurred outrage among members of the LGBTQ+ community who protested in Mexico City's main thoroughway on Monday. Around 100 people marched chanting: "Samantha listen, we're fighting for you" and carrying signs reading "your hate speech kills."

Another group of protesters earlier in the day spray



A member of the LGBTQ+ community holds a portrait of transgender activist Samantha Gómez Fonseca during a rally to protest her murder in Mexico City, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024. Gómez was shot in Mexico City Sunday.

Associated Press

painting the words "trans lives matter" on the walls of Mexico's National Palace. Fonseca, the activist and politician slain on Sunday, originally intended to march alongside other activists to call for greater ac-

ceptance of transgender people in society. After her death, the march quickly turned into a call for justice and for more comprehensive laws around hate crimes. Paulina Carrasco, a 41-year-old trans woman

among the marchers, said it felt like "the violence was knocking on our front door."

"We are scared, but with that fear we're going to keep fighting," Carrasco said. "We're going to do

everything in our power so the next generations won't have to live in fear."

Gay and transgender populations are regularly attacked and killed in Mexico, a nation marked by its "machismo" and highly religious population. The brutality of some of the attacks is meant to send a message to Queer people that they are not welcome in society.

Over the past six years, the rights group Letra S has documented at least 513 targeted killings of LGBTQ+ people in Mexico. Just last year, the violent death of one of the most recognizable LGBTQ+ figures in Mexico, Ociel Baena, sparked a similar wave of outrage and protests.

Some like 55-year-old Xomalia Ramírez said the violence was a partly consequence of comments made by Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador last week when he described a transgender congresswoman as "man dressed as a woman." □

Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan indicted on charge of violating marriage law

By MUNIR AHMED
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A Pakistani court on Tuesday indicted imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife on a charge that their 2018 marriage violated the legal requirement that a woman wait three months before remarriage, his lawyer said.

Khan denied the charge, and his lawyer, Intisar Panjutha, called the case one of scores against the former prime minister that he sees as a politically motivated attempt to keep Khan out of Pakistan's general elections to be held next month. Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, who is a spiritual healer, was previously married to a man named Khawar Maneka who has claimed that they divorced in November

2017, less than three months ahead of Khan's Jan. 1, 2018 marriage, which was announced in February of that year. But Bibi has said the divorce was in August of 2017. Khan, who previ-

ously was married to socialite Jemima Goldsmith and journalist Reham Khan, and his current wife have both denied that they violated the three-month waiting period. The waiting period

is a requirement of Islamic law that is upheld under Pakistani law.

Khan pleaded not guilty Tuesday when charges were read out to him by a judge at Adiala prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. Bibi was not present at the time of indictment, though she has previously denied the charge.

"Everyone knows he's being charged and incarcerated in bogus cases to keep him out of electoral race, however people of Pakistan don't seem to be giving up on him," Khan's lawyer, Panjutha, said.

Khan, who was ousted from power in a no-confidence vote in Parliament in April 2022, is currently serving a prison term in a graft case. Khan has also been embroiled in more than 150

cases, which include inciting people to violence after his arrest in May 2023.

During nationwide riots in May, Khan's supporters from his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party attacked the military's headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, stormed an air base in Mianwali in the eastern Punjab province and torched a building housing state-run Radio Pakistan in the northwest.

The violence subsided only when Khan was released at the time by the Supreme Court.

On Tuesday, police arrested Khan ally Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on charges of inciting people to violence in May in the city of Rawalpindi. Ahmed served as interior minister in Khan's government until his ouster.



Supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) a political party of former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, hold a rally against the decision of election commission for the electoral symbol of a cricket bat, Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024.

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ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history,

which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.



In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the

National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

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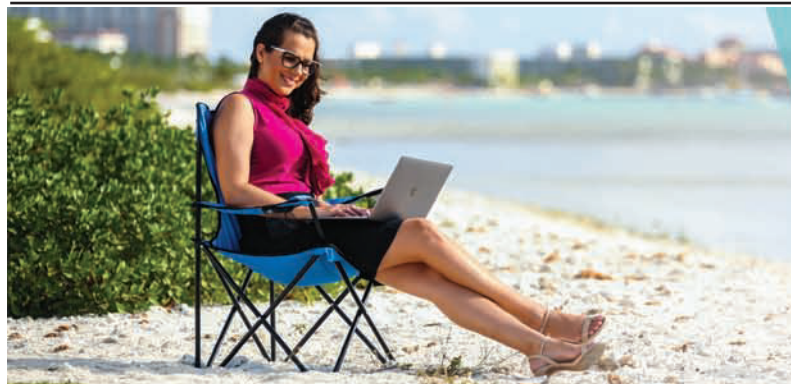
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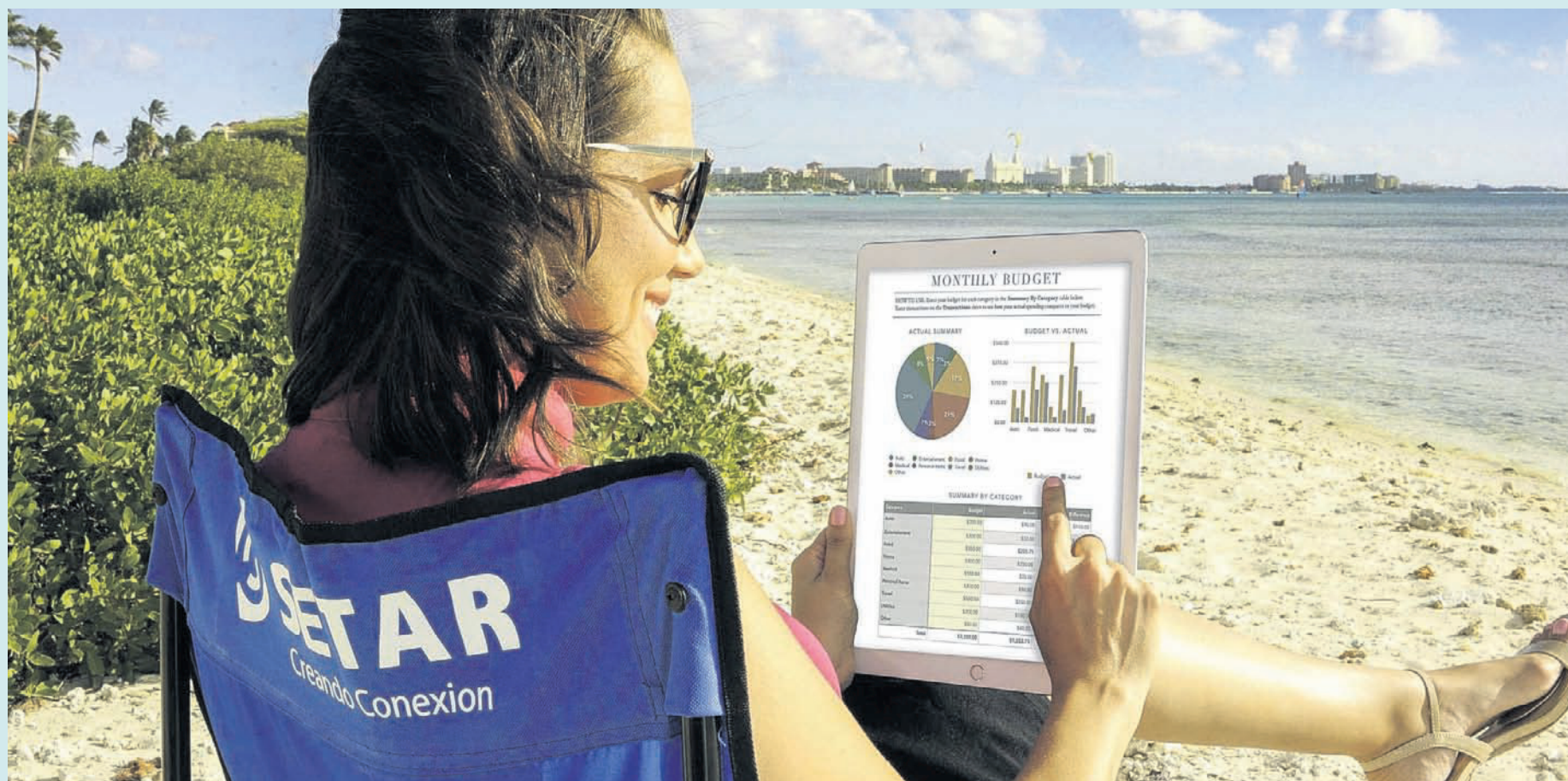


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you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Nancy and George Bascom, Nila and John Crouch From Mount Sterling, Kentucky, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is our happy place away from home is this beautiful island. For the first time we stopped into San Nicholas Store for a delicious brunch. A visit to the galleries completed our day. Aruba to me is sharing this experience with friends. It means everything. Thank you for your hospitality."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

Po-kè Ono - A Taste of Asia with a Twist: Exploring Flavorful Fusion



Amidst the vibrant paradise of Aruba, where turquoise waters meet golden sands, a culinary gem awaits: Po-kè Ono, the coolest Asian fusion spot that will whisk you away on an exotic flavor adventure. Experience an explosion of Asian tastes like never before led by the creative genius of Chef Urvin Croes, the mastermind behind Aruba's acclaimed Infini restaurant. Po-kè Ono serves up an enticing menu that blends traditional Asian flavors with modern twists, all within a cheery ambiance that exudes warmth and tropical charm.

At Po-kè Ono, diners can savor an array of flavors from the new menu items that stand out for their artful presentation and delectable taste. One of the highlights is the traditional Vietnamese Pho, a soul-soothing soup consisting of bone broth, rice noodles, succulent thinly sliced meat, fresh herbs, and zesty spices, making it an explosion of taste in every spoonful.

Another must-try dish is The Elvis Presley Bao, a playful homage to the King of Rock 'n' Roll. This fun creation features fried spam with sweet teriyaki, peanut sauce, crispy fried plantains, crisp lettuce, red onions, and a spicy kick from the Kewpie mayo. The combination of sweet, savory, and spicy flavors is a harmony that leaves guests coming back for more.

If you're craving a delicious fusion of Indonesian and Hawaiian influences, the Babi Sate Poke hits all the right notes. Indonesian-style pork skewers are served with rich peanut sauce, crunchy crispy onions, pickled cucumber, and creamy avocado, resulting in a medley of textures and flavors that captivate the palate.

Beyond the flavors, Po-kè Ono impresses with its thoughtfully curated ambiance that reflects the Asian fusion theme. With two locations in Renaissance Marketplace and the lobby of Azure Residence, the restaurant exudes a tropical and laid-back vibe, inviting guests to unwind and indulge in a delightful dining experience. The use of fun cocktail glasses and relaxed decor further enhances the sense of pleasure, making every visit a memorable one.



Get ready for double the fun at Po-kè Ono with their awesome two-for-one happy hour. From 4 pm to 6 pm, this fantastic deal lets you dive into selected items at an incredible value. It's the perfect opportunity to try out their fresh new menu while sipping on delightful beverages.

Meet the culinary maestro, Chef Urvin Croes, the creative force behind Po-kè Ono and Infini. With an unyielding passion for Asian cuisine, rooted in his Chinese heritage, he sprinkles his magic on every plate at Po-kè Ono, crafting innovative and artfully delicious dishes. Having honed his skills in top-notch hotel restaurants and even snatching the title of 'Iron Chef Aruba's first winner,' Chef Urvin's culinary expertise shines through in every mouth-watering bite.

Promoting Aruba as a culinary destination, Chef Urvin sources ingredients locally whenever possible, supporting farmers who share his passion for quality produce. The result is a menu that expertly balances traditional recipes with modern techniques, elevating every dish to new heights. His love for food and the cultural stories behind each creation are evident in the passionate manner in which he prepares and presents his dishes.

Notably, Po-kè Ono has earned its well-deserved reputation as the number one restaurant on Tripadvisor Palm Beach, a testament to its success and popularity among locals and tourists alike.

Po-kè Ono is like a treasure trove of Asian fusion delights, all crafted with love and expertise by the one and only Chef Urvin Croes. You'll be treated to an array of dishes, from Pho to



inventive Bao creations, each artfully presented. The relaxed ambiance and awesome two-for-one happy hour make dining here an absolute pleasure. Once you've tasted the magic of Po-kè Ono, you'll be coming back for more! So, what are you waiting for? Dive in and indulge in this captivating world of Asian-inspired goodness!

PO-KÈ ONO
By Urvin Croes
Poke • Sushi • Bao's

ARUBA'S ASIAN FUSION HOTSPOT!

View menu

Indulge in a mouthwatering fusion of flavors, featuring baos, sushis, pho, poke bowls, and more. **Don't miss our daily specials and join us for happy hour from 4-6 pm, daily.** Experience the best of Asian cuisine at Po-kè Ono!

Two locations:
Poke-Renaissance Marketplace & Azure Residence



Article by Etnia Nativa

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TaraTata

Episode CCXL - 240

Each week, Etnia Nativa presents a new episode about cultural heritage, focusing on native knowledge and the importance of defending the true identity of Aruba. During this episode, we share a brief history of how the city of Oranjestad came to be.

The first buildings in Oranjestad were erected in late 1797; it became a little town in less than thirty years. Its houses were anything but large, and all of them were on one floor; some had an attic, except the commander's house, which had two stories, an attic, and a second floor with a balcony facing the bay.

Upon the completion of Fort Zoutman in 1797, white native Protestants gradually started building their stone houses at Ponton that offered a strategic view over the south and west coasts of the island. But in those days, without motorized transportation or a proper paved road, it was a bit too far from the site where ships laid anchor. At the beginning of 1797—we know this accurately—there was not a single house at Paardenbaai. Eight years later, therefore, in 1805, there were as many as 32.

The ships arrived at Paardenbaai, the Bay of Horses, named by the Spaniards, who used an area called TaraTata by the natives to import horses. Tara Tata, a name derived from the Paleo language, refers to primitive or Stone Age inhabitants. For them, TaraTata meant a place of arrival, since there was a beach

in between the mangrove forest that covered most of the rocky coast line going east toward Savaneta. On the other side of the coast, on the continent—actually, Venezuela—there was a place called TaraTara, meaning place of departure.

Concerning the building of houses; there were specific rules in effect that one should consider when constructing a house in those days close to the bay; there had to be an open space of not less than 800 paces between the fort and the nearest-located building of the city, the so-called esplanade.

As soon as tiles were introduced, several roofs were entirely covered with them, and the dwellings of the less-good-to-do had roofs constructed of maize stalks or palm leaves, while the traditional natives had their sturdy but effective mud mixture roof, well known as "torto." The construction of cottages of this kind consisted mostly of a pre-woven structure made out of sticks, branches, and small timber. Stone or brick houses of the period were almost all white-washed, the tiled roofs being

deep orange. Some fresh dwellings are provided with a rainwater collection system and a dug-out well.

The growth of the town had almost come to a stop after thirty years. In 1827, the town had been divided into an eastern and western half. The eastern half toward Dakota numbered 77 houses in 1837, of which 33 were brick ones. It appeared that the more fashionable quarter was to be found in the part of the town closest to Dakota. Almost half of the houses in this area were made out of local bricks.

The houses in Oranjestad were built in a very disorderly fashion, in spite of the 1822 regulation. Buildings were sometimes placed at less than fifty yards' distance from the cannon on Fort Zoutman, effectively preventing the garrison from opening fire on any ship or object in the bay without firing right into them. There was even a house thirty meters from this stronghold," making it impossible to dominate the countryside in times of unrest.

The roads were bad and pock-marked with holes. In the evening, it was impossible to pick one's way through the maze of houses scattered about in haphazard fashion without coming a cropper, as there was no illumination. Finally, in 1827, one regulation ordered everyone to clean the roads around their houses and to clear away loose rocks. However, inside the town, cattle and livestock in general roamed about at will, while pigs were rooting up the unpaved streets. Not before the close of the 19th century did what are now Nassau Street and Wilhelmina Street get a few hundred yards of pavement consisting of what the Dutch call babies' heads, i.e., cobbles.



Would you like to know a little more about Aruba's origins, cultural influences, and more? So Etnia Nativa is a thematic encounter for you. Be one of the exclusive visitors to a private residential setting housing an assemblage of native art, archaeological artifacts, colonial furniture, and other items belonging to the first Oranjestad's families. Let Etnia Nativa guide and lecture you towards the most interesting and revealing native Aruban stories, undiscovering the island's life beyond beaches.

Whats App +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com

National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation



The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species

of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, lo-

cated at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters



(617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these

adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

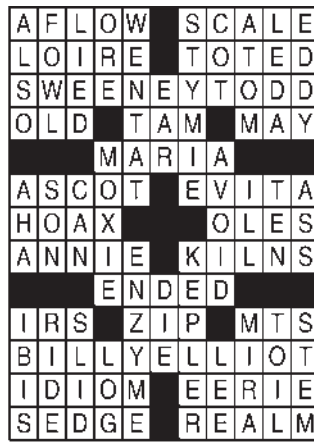
For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



CROSSWORD

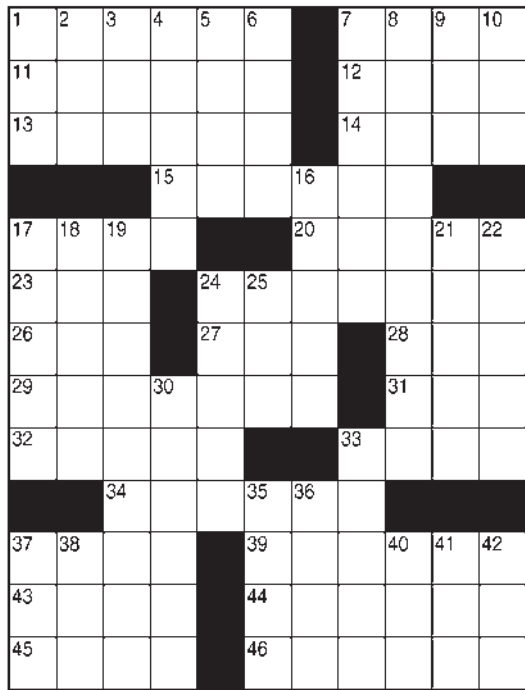
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 45 Title
 - 1 Tilted paper type
 - 7 Fix a story
 - 11 Second-largest nation
 - 12 Ticked off
 - 13 Swirled
 - 14 Large family
 - 15 Scoundrel
 - 17 Tabby and Spot
 - 20 Garden pest
 - 23 In the past
 - 24 Headline setting
 - 26 Online address
 - 27 Have debts
 - 28 Much of N. Amer.
 - 29 Many profile pictures
 - 31 Day light
 - 32 Patriot Allen
 - 33 Tiara adorners
 - 34 Punctual
 - 37 Satyr's kin
 - 39 Brain-based
 - 43 Otherwise
 - 44 Inmate's hope
- DOWN**
- 1 Bar rocks
 - 2 Wee bit
 - 3 In addition
 - 4 Refuges
 - 5 Concept
 - 6 Bounders
 - 7 Houdini feat
 - 8 Toy store buy
 - 9 Lyricist Gershwin
 - 10 Kayo count
 - 16 Zoo sights
 - 17 Brief rest
 - 18 Snowy wader
 - 19 Turnpike sight
 - 21 Briefly
 - 22 College heads
 - 24 Pen part
 - 25 Really impress
 - 30 Struck out
 - 33 Book category
 - 35 Little devils
 - 36 Ham or lamb
 - 37 Nourished
 - 38 Pub offering
 - 40 Sandal sight
 - 41 Completely
 - 42 French article



Yesterday's answer

- 18 Snowy wader
- 19 Turnpike sight
- 21 Briefly
- 22 College heads
- 24 Pen part
- 25 Really impress
- 30 Struck out
- 33 Book category
- 35 Little devils
- 36 Ham or lamb
- 37 Nourished
- 38 Pub offering
- 40 Sandal sight
- 41 Completely
- 42 French article



A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-17

CRYPTOQUOTE

Z A M H M V C M W Q E Z W H T E
F M O R Q M P E , B J I M W D A W G Z M Q
J H W F R R I , V W J Z J H N Z R F M
V Q J Z Z M H . — Y M B R T C
F M W Z Z J M

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: OUR MOST BASIC INSTINCT IS NOT FOR SURVIVAL BUT FOR FAMILY. — PAUL PEARSALL

JetBlue's \$3.8 billion buyout of Spirit Airlines is blocked by judge citing threat to competition

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — A federal judge is siding with the Biden administration and blocking JetBlue Airways from buying Spirit Airlines, saying the \$3.8 billion deal would reduce competition. The Justice Department sued to block the merger, saying it would drive up fares by eliminating Spirit, the nation's biggest low-cost airline. JetBlue said it disagreed with the ruling and was considering whether to appeal. The New York carrier argued that it needs the deal to compete better against bigger rivals that dominate the U.S. air-travel market. "We continue to believe that our combination is the best opportunity to increase much needed competition and choice by bringing low fares and great service to more customers in more markets," JetBlue said in a statement. □



A line of Spirit Airlines jets sit on the tarmac at the Orlando International Airport on May 20, 2020, in Orlando, Fla.

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How Mexico City influenced the icy Alaska mystery of 'True Detective: Night Country'

By **BERENICE BAUTISTA**
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — For filmmaker Issa López, the first question was where?

"The moment I understood it was the Arctic, everything started falling into place," the director of "True Detective: Night Country" told reporters in Mexico City ahead of Sunday's premiere on HBO and HBO Max. All six episodes were written and directed by López.

The Mexican director was looking for a region of the United States that had a totally different physical feel from the previous three "True Detective" installments, which were set in Louisiana, Los Angeles and Arkansas, respectively. And that's how Ennis, a fictional and remote town in Alaska, came to be.

López conceived the season "in the darkest time of the pandemic," infusing the story with a sense of loneliness and loss. Jodie Foster plays Liz Danvers, a detective who suffered the death



This image released by HBO shows Kali Reis, right, and Jodie Foster in a scene from "True Detective: Night Country."

of her son and husband. Kali Reis stars as Evangeline Navarro, a detective who lost her mother to mental illness and worries about the same fate befalling her sister. Both seek to shed light on the disappearance

of eight scientists from an isolated research station, and also face the unsolved murder of an Inuit woman who was an environmental activist and midwife.

López, who grew up in the Mexico City neighborhood

of Tlatelolco "without money and in a crazy situation and barely surviving," had a special interest in portraying violence against women and the disappearances of Indigenous people that are not investigated in

Associated Press

the United States.

"It's an absolutely terrifying situation among the Indigenous population, almost as what's happening in Mexico," she said. "The color of your skin is tied to your financial possibilities, your education, and your expectations in life and your expectations in death, apparently."

Navarro is a woman of Dominican and Inuit descent; Danvers has an Inuit stepdaughter: "Maybe the biggest difference between our 'True Detective,' Season 4, and 'True Detective' 1, 2 and 3 is that the two main detectives can relate to the victims," Foster said. For Reis, developing Navarro's character was a complex process that required her to step into the shoes of a police officer and reckon with police brutality.

"I being a woman and of color, and I also faced police brutality myself, I have been on the other end of playing Evangeline Navarro. □

Elton John achieves rare EGOT status with Emmy win for Dodger Stadium farewell concert special

By **JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.**
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Elton John has achieved EGOT status.

The famed British singer-pianist won an Emmy Award on Monday night for best

variety special (live) for "Elton John Live: Farewell from Dodger Stadium," a three-hour concert documentary that streamed on Disney+.

John said he was "incredibly humbled" for joining the elite group of EGOT win-

ners who have won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards. "The journey to this moment has been filled with passion, dedication, and the unwavering support of my fans all around the world," John, 76, said in a statement after winning his trophy.

The superstar performer has five competitive Grammys, most recently for "Elton John & Tim Rice's Aida" in 2001; two Oscars for "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" from "The Lion King" in 1994 and "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" from "Rocketman"; along with a Tony for his original score on "Aida."

He is one of the top-selling solo artists of all time, and he holds the record for biggest-selling physical single of all time thanks to the 33 million copies sold for "Can-

dle in the Wind" in 1997.

John became the 19th person to reach EGOT status after Viola Davis achieved the feat when she won a Grammy last year. Others performers who have EGOTs include Whoopi Goldberg, Jennifer Hudson and John Legend.

David Furnish, John's husband and a producer on the concert special, said John was overjoyed Monday night about winning his first-ever Emmy, and he "screamed out loud." Furnish said an "incredibly honored" John was unable to attend the awards ceremony since he's recovering from recent surgery.

"We FaceTimed him. We woke him up in the middle of the night," Furnish said while holding John's award backstage. e's back in the

U.K. He's had his left knee replaced which isn't surprising when you think of the number of pianos he's jumped off." On Tuesday, U.S. President Joe Biden congratulated John on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

"Sir Elton John has been a tidal wave throughout his career to help people rise up and make hope and history rhyme," he posted.

John's concert was the last of a three-night stand at the stadium in Los Angeles as part of the North American leg of his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour, which began in September 2018 with the first of the 300-plus scheduled dates.

It was suspended in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic and resumed in 2021. □



Elton John performs on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington on Sept. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

At halftime of the NBA season, the Thunder and Wolves should be feeling great

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Being good at the half-way point of the NBA season guarantees absolutely nothing. Take last year for example, when only three of the top 11 teams at half-time of the season would go on to win a playoff series and another three of those teams missed the postseason entirely. Yes, a lot can and will change between now and April.

That said, there are some surprises as this season hits halftime, none bigger than the success stories being crafted in Minnesota and Oklahoma City. They've basically been atop the Western Conference since around Thanksgiving, with win totals on pace to smash the preseason expectations put forth by oddsmakers. Many of the expected contenders indeed look like contenders: Boston has the best record in the NBA, defending champion Denver has been predictably excellent, Milwaukee and Philadelphia are near the top of the East and the Los Angeles Clippers have a better record than anybody over the last six weeks or so. No surprises there. But the Timberwolves and the



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, left, looks to pass the ball next to Orlando Magic guard Jalen Suggs (4) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, in Oklahoma City.

Thunder have clearly raised some eyebrows.

"They take the challenge, and they like to guard, particularly against these heavyweight teams," Minnesota coach Chris Finch said of his club. "A lot of our young guys are still proving that they can be just as good in a lot of ways and win that battle. We talk about winning that battle with the guy in front of you

all the time and they take pride in that." It's pretty safe to assume that either Finch or Oklahoma City's Mark Daigneault will be spending All-Star weekend in Indianapolis as coach of the Western Conference. That task goes to the coach with the best record two weeks before the All-Star Game (which makes this year's cutoff date Feb. 4) and last year's coaches

are ineligible which means Denver's Michael Malone is assured of having that weekend off. So is Boston's Joe Mazzulla, meaning it's almost certain that either Philadelphia's Nick Nurse or Milwaukee's Adrian Griffin will be heading to Indy to coach the East. The Thunder have been building for their future for years, stockpiling draft picks like squirrels do with acorns

entering the winter months. Thing is, the future might really be starting now: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander is a bona fide star, Chet Holmgren is a legitimate threat to Victor Wembanyama's rookie of the year candidacy and Oklahoma City has a starting lineup where everybody is 25 or younger. There are 15 active players in the league with more points than the entire Thunder starting lineup does combined. LeBron James is about 24,000 points ahead of OKC's first five. But here they are, and they look like a problem.

I think there is an uncommon maturity about them," Daigneault said. "And as I've said before, a lot of it is who they are as people, and I think a lot of them had that walking through the door. And then it gains momentum when there are like-minded people together and they bounce off each other in that way." The Wolves had 66-1 odds to win an NBA title entering the season. The Thunder, 100-1. The odds have moved considerably since; FanDuel Sportsbook had Minnesota at 21-1 on Monday, Oklahoma City at 18-

Associated Press

Dusty Baker returning to the San Francisco Giants as a special assistant, AP source says

By **JANIE McCAULEY**
AP Baseball Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Dusty Baker is returning to



Houston Astros manager Dusty Baker, left, attends batting practice before Game 6 of the baseball AL Championship Series against the Texas Rangers, Oct. 23, 2023, in Houston.

Associated Press

the San Francisco Giants for a third stint with the team, this time as a special assistant in the front office, according to a person with direct knowledge of the hire. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday night because Baker's new position with the club hadn't been formally announced. That is expected to happen this week. Baker is still beloved in the Bay Area and this very well could be his final baseball stop in what almost certainly will be a Hall of Fame career. Back with the Giants, he will serve as a spe-

cial assistant to President of Baseball Operations Farhan Zaidi and CEO Larry Baer. Baker managed the Giants from 1993-2002 before coming back to work as an adviser to Baer during a break from managing in 2018-19. The 74-year-old Baker retired from the Houston Astros following the 2023 season his 26th year as a major league manager. He said then he still had more to offer a team and hoped to take on an advisory role. Baker finally won a long-awaited World Series title as a manager with Houston in 2022. He owns a 2,183-

1,862 career managerial record with the Giants, Cubs, Reds, Nationals and Astros. He left the Giants on difficult terms following their World Series loss to the Angels in 2002 and took over as skipper of the Cubs. Still, this new job is a natural fit. Baker repaired his relationships in San Francisco over time the Giants offered him flexibility to watch son Darren's college games at the University of California at Berkeley and still owns a home in Granite Bay outside Sacramento, where he loves to garden and grow grapes for his own wine.

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Eagles center Jason Kelce intends to retire after 13 NFL seasons, AP sources say

By **DAN GELSTON**
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Jason Kelce stood on the sideline in tears as the final seconds ticked off in his likely final NFL game. Kelce embraced his long-time offensive line coach. He removed his helmet once the game ended a Philadelphia Eagles loss that completed a harrowing season-ending collapse and extended his hand to his wife and his father in the stands.

What Kelce knew then what the gregarious center couldn't bring himself to say when he declined to speak to the media in the aftermath of the defeat was that his football career was over.

The 36-year-old Kelce has waived on retirement over the last few seasons. Coach Nick Sirianni added to Kelce's lore by shipping a keg of beer to the center's home to entice him to return in 2022.

He has been the heart of

the Eagles, a hero on the Philadelphia sports scene, a Super Bowl champion. But after 13 seasons, 156 straight starts and six All-Pro Team selections, Kelce has told teammates he intends to retire, three people informed of the decision told The Associated Press.

They spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Tuesday out of respect for Kelce's decision, which he has not yet made public.

"The goat!!!. Appreciate ya big time," Eagles cornerback Darius Slay Jr. wrote on social media.

Kelce could explain his decision as early as Wednesday, when the next episode of the "New Heights" podcast he co-hosts with his brother, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce boyfriend of pop star Taylor Swift was expected to drop. The brothers played each other last season in the Super Bowl that was won by the Chiefs. "I love him. Yeah, obviously we're not there at that posi-



Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce walks off the field following an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, in Tampa, Fla.
Associated Press

tion yet, ready to talk about that, but he's special and I love him," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said after a 32-9 loss to Tampa Bay. "He's one of the most special guys I've been around. He's always got a place here and always want him to play." The burly, bushy-haired and bearded Kelce has been a stalwart of the offensive line since he was a sixth-round pick in the 2011 draft out of

Cincinnati. He turned into an Iron Man after he missed most of the 2012 season with a partially torn MCL and torn ACL. Kelce's credentials go far beyond football. He's a podcast co-host. He was the subject of the "Kelce" documentary. Heck, Kelce was even named one of People magazine's Sexiest Men for 2023, alongside Timothée Chalamet and Jamie Foxx.

Swifties flooded social media with homemade videos and tributes for Kelce. And who would have ever guessed that even during training camp?

Her song "Long Live" was a popular choice for social media tributes, in large part to lyrics that included: "Long live all the magic we made/And bring on all the pretenders/One day, we will be remembered."

One user with Swift as a profile photo wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, "Here I am crying over the loss of Taylor's boyfriend's brother."

Kelce is a beloved Philly personality that has done everything from belting out holiday hits on a pair of Christmas albums and playing celebrity bartender on the beach. Kelce performed the national anthem at a 76ers game and partied with the Phanatic while he pounded a beer to a roaring ovation at a Phillies postseason game. □

Professional Fighters League takes first step into pay-per-view with Saudi Arabia card



Mixed martial arts fighter Ryan Bader poses with his championship belts at a Bellator news conference, March 9, 2020, in New York.
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The PFL is headed to pay-per-view, with the MMA promotion running a Super Fight event Feb. 24 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Professional Fighters League first PPV will also showcase talent from the Bellator promotion, recently purchased by PFL and placed under its umbrella. The deal was aided in part by Saudi Arabia's recent purchase into PFL. The purchase was relatively modest \$100 million according to the Financial Times but even in a minority role, Saudi-backed SRJ Sports In-

vestments ensured mixed-martial arts events will take place in that country.

As part of the deal, PFL will host multiple PPV Super Fight Division pay-per-view events in Saudi Arabia each year. The deal is just the latest move into sports by the Saudi Arabia, which has had a growing influence on professional golf, soccer and horse racing just to name a few in recent years.

The card features four fights of current PFL Champions vs current Bellator Champions. PFL's Renan Ferreira (12-3) fights the first ath-

lete in Bellator history to become champion in two weight divisions simultaneously, Ryan Bader (31-7) in the main event. PFL Light Heavyweight champ Impa Kasanganay (15-3) takes on undefeated Johnny Eblen (14-0) in a 185-pound fight. The card also has matchups of previous PFL title challenges vs previous Bellator title challengers.

PFL is the only organization in MMA with a sports-season format, where fighters compete in a regular season, playoffs, and championship each year. □